



# LONG STORY SHORT

## A Year through the Bible

### Reflection Guide

#### The End of Time: Revelation

##### Exploring the Story, Chapter 31

In the book of Revelation, the big story of the Bible comes full circle. The story that began with God and humanity dwelling together in intimate relationship now ends in a city with God and humanity reunited in the New Creation. Using highly figurative language, the book of Revelation is meant to comfort those who are suffering and vividly depict the promise of God's salvation.

#### MONDAY

*Read:* Revelation 1

*Reflect:* John has been imprisoned on the island of Patmos for preaching about Jesus. This book contains a series of visions he has, and he writes them to seven churches in present-day Turkey to offer them hope as they suffer persecution. Do you find John's depiction of Jesus alarming or comforting? Why? Do you share John's belief that Jesus is in control of the world? Why or why not? What evidence do you have for your belief?

*Respond:* In prayer, offer praise to Jesus because he is alive and in control.

#### TUESDAY

*Read:* Revelation 2

*Reflect:* The first three of the seven letters John is told to write are meant to encourage the churches to remain faithful and hold on to the authentic Gospel about Jesus. John promises that remaining faithful will result in suffering, but abandoning the Gospel will result in far worse consequences. As you read these messages, what emotions arise in you? Why? How, if at all, do these letters affect the importance you attach to remaining faithful to Jesus amidst difficult circumstances?

*Respond:* In prayer, ask God for the courage and strength to remain faithful to Jesus.

#### WEDNESDAY

*Read:* Revelation 3

*Reflect:* Each of the churches to which John writes are facing different difficulties. Some are facing persecution, while others have become numb to their own need for God's grace because of their own wealth. As you read these letters, which one resonates most closely with you? Why? What encouragement (or warning) from these letters, if any, applies most readily to your own spiritual life? How, if at all, could your faith be different if you increasingly took these letters to heart?

*Respond:* In prayer, ask God to open your eyes to your need for God's grace.

#### THURSDAY

*Read:* Revelation 4-5

*Reflect:* Heaven is filled night and day with worship and praise to God. The prayers of God's people are offered like incense. And Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, is declared worthy to approach the throne and receive the praise of heaven. What emotions does this scene evoke in you? Why? If you were in this scene, what would your song of worship and praise to God have been?

*Respond:* In prayer, offer your praise and worship to Jesus Christ because he is worthy of honor and glory and blessing.

#### FRIDAY

*Read:* Revelation 19:1-10

*Reflect:* After highly figurative and dramatic battle scene, the lamb emerges victorious. Heaven again resounds with the sounds of worship and praise. As you look at the world, over what brokenness, if any, do you want God to be victorious? Why? Where, if at all, do you see God's power currently at work defeating the power of sin and brokenness?

*Respond:* In prayer, tell God where you most want God to act to defeat brokenness and demonstrate Christ's victory.

#### SATURDAY

*Read:* Revelation 21

*Reflect:* Throughout the story of Scripture, God's desire has been to dwell among the people. Now as John is able to see ahead to the end of time, John sees a new heaven and a new earth and a new city that is God's home among humanity. As you read this story, how does this make you feel? Why? What desires and dreams for a reconciled and redeemed world arise in you as you read John's description? How, if at all, might these desires inform how you put your faith in action?

*Respond:* In prayer, share your desires for a world healed of brokenness with God.

#### SUNDAY

*Read:* Revelation 22

*Reflect:* Our story began in a Garden, and it ends in a city. It begins and ends with the tree of life. The curse of sin has been removed from God's creation, and all is as God originally intended. Humanity and God, once again, dwell together, in the close relationship that God always intended. Do you find John's description of the New Creation appealing? Why or why not? What do you think it might be like to live in the New Creation that John describes?

*Respond:* In worship this morning, praise God for the hope of God's New Creation, and cultivate your own desire to live in intimate relationship with God.